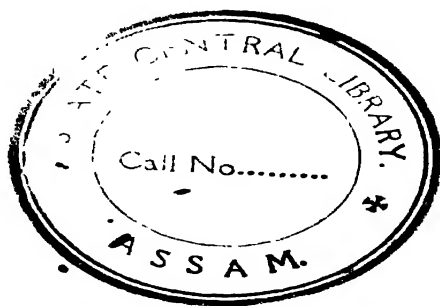


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**A HANDBOOK OF
LATIN LITERATURE**



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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PRIMITIVE CULTURE IN GREECE

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A HANDBOOK OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY

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A HANDBOOK OF LATIN LITERATURE

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO
THE DEATH OF ST. AUGUSTINE

by

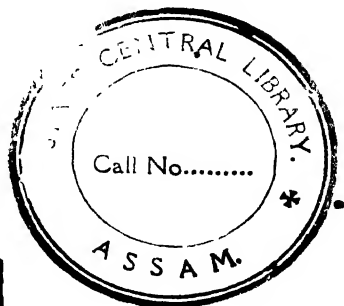
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Mārem strepitum fīdis intendisse Latinae

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PREFACE

LIKE its companion, my *Handbook of Greek Literature*, this volume claims no originality of matter or treatment, but is an attempt to put together, within a moderate compass, such things as are known or reasonably supposed concerning the classical and early post-classical writings in the Latin tongue. In one respect it differs from the other work. That excluded all Jewish and Christian authors as representing a spirit totally different from that of Greece and therefore needing to be treated separately. But Latin Christianity, so far as the author can perceive, is separated by no such gap from the main stream of Western literature. Greece originated both form and substance to an astonishing degree, and therefore a totally new tone was heard as soon as her language was used to express thoughts largely of Hebrew origin. Rome originated little, and far less change had to be made when her writers moved away from one set of foreign influences to another. Consequently the reader will find, in the last chapter, a sketch of those Christian writers whose interest for the non-theologian seemed greatest or their influence in any direction most important.

Many scholars, including not a few whom I have never seen, have helped me directly or indirectly. If an individual is to be singled out for thanks, I may mention Professor A. D. Nock, of Harvard University, to whose friendly criticism several of the following chapters owe much.

H. J. ROSE

ST. ANDREWS,
February, 1936

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

A NEW edition having been called for, the author has taken the opportunity to make such corrections of misprints and of unseemly blunders of his own as were possible without change of pagination, which was technically out of the question.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

WITHIN the same limits as formerly, further corrections and small additions have been made for the new imprint. One thing, however, has been left standing. Sums of money are many times given in sterling and in American dollars; the relative values of these currencies remain the old ones, before the sharp decline of the former, i.e., the pound is taken as not much less than five dollars. It has been thought better to let this obsolete ratio stand than to alter the passages in question, which then might need fresh alteration in a short time in consequence of further fluctuations.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

THE historian of Latin literature has a strange and fascinating story to tell. He must speak of a people capable indeed of civilization, but little better than barbarians when their history begins; he must relate how they adopted from strangers whom they at once despised and admired a growth foreign to themselves and finding little in the way of a native stock on to which it might be grafted; how the new plant flourished and spread and became a mighty tree; how in time it was made ready to send out those vigorous seedlings that have since grown into the literatures of Western Europe and of America. And this task he must accomplish from materials all too scanty, with little help from the early records of the people of whom he treats, and with the obligation of interpreting as best he may a long series of writings whereof but a fraction survives to our time, couched in a language presenting formidable difficulties to any modern, and not least to a native of more northerly climes.

If we try to estimate the condition of Italy at the date when Attic literature was raising its head and Greek lyric poetry was entering upon its final and most glorious stage—say, between the birth of Pindar, 522 or 518 B.C., and the Battle of Salamis, 480—we shall find a strange and varied picture, not very suggestive for the most part of literary or intellectual activity, present or future. The peninsula had been settled, first (about the middle of the third millennium B.C.) by neolithic Mediterranean peoples coming partly from the south, across the chain of islands, once a land-bridge, which took them over Sicily into Calabria, partly from the north, by way of Spain and the Riviera. These invaders, meeting little or no resistance from the sparse palaeolithic population, had occupied the whole country and held it till they were invaded by successive waves of new-comers